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ABSTRACT

This resource manual is designed to assist Alaska school districts in recruiting and retaining special education teachers. It offers 50 practical suggestions for developing an effective recruitment program, focusing on the processes of gathering information; developing recruiters, materials, and strategies; and screening and interviewing applicants. Sample suggestions include: develop a videotape presentation of the school district and the community, promote the employment opportunities available for spouses, and accept special education student teachers into the school district for their practica and student teaching experiences. Over 100 strategies are then presented for enhancing teacher retention, categorized as: welcoming new staff, collegiality, work control, professional development, achievement and recognition, and resources. Sample teacher retention strategies include: arrange a social function to introduce new staff to the community, provide a network to share ideas, implement teacher assistance teams, provide job rotation options, tell teachers what they are doing "right," and provide access to professional literature. An appendix presents a list of people to contact for specific information. (Contains 13 references.) (JDD)

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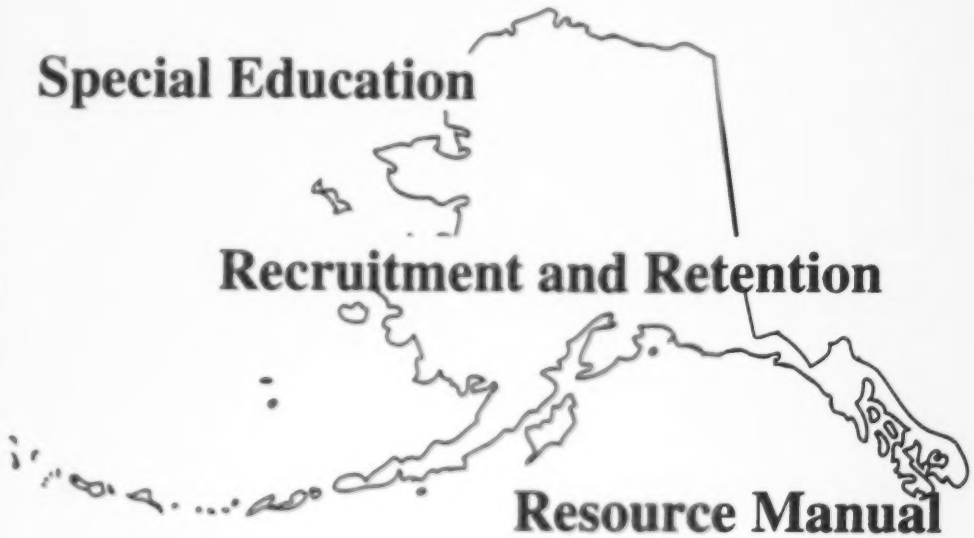
ED 376 635

Alaska

Special Education Recruitment and Retention Resource Manual



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September 1994

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INTRODUCTION

Federal legislation (P.L. 101-476, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA]) included provisions to assess the supply and demand of special education teachers. The law, which took effect in 1993, requires "a description of the procedures and activities the State will undertake to ensure an adequate supply of qualified special education and related service personnel." The provision of the law was designed to meet the general shortage of special education personnel for the increasing numbers of students who needed special education services.

Acting under the auspices of the Department of Education, the Alaska Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Committee was given the responsibility of developing, guiding, and monitoring the personnel plan. In 1992, after reviewing recruitment and retention studies from other states, the CSPD formulated a three-fold plan of action, as follows (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993):

1. The first task was to conduct a survey of all Alaskan teachers (N=1500) who held an endorsement in special education to determine their movement patterns over five years, incentives to continue teaching, deterrents to teaching in special education, and future career plans (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

2. The second task was to survey Alaskan administrators of special education from the 55 school districts to determine special education recruitment and retention problems. The survey was sent to all special education directors via facsimile machine and had a return rate of 100% (Dittman Research, 1993).

3. The third task was to develop a resource manual to assist school districts in recruiting and retaining special education teachers. This resource manual contains the culmination of information from the first two surveys, and a follow-up survey by Brady (1994), as well as information from a literature review.

The development of this resource manual was funded through a grant from CSPD. The authors also wish to thank the University of Alaska Anchorage School of Education for supporting the project and all the special education administrators who volunteered to share their expertise and experience.

This document is being submitted to the ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education. Hopefully it will be accepted for inclusion in ERIC. Persons interested in obtaining a copy of this document should conduct an ERIC search to determine if it has been accepted and to obtain the ED number for ordering.

June 1994

RECRUITMENT

Definition

Recruitment is defined as locating and attracting personnel who possess, or are eligible for, a special education endorsement in Alaska.

Alaska Teacher Placement

Many Alaskan districts, especially small rural districts, use Alaska Teacher Placement (ATP) Center exclusively for recruitment of teachers. ATP is located on campus at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The Center serves teachers seeking employment and districts recruiting teachers. Teachers may open a placement file for a nominal fee. This information is furnished to districts who request specific types of qualifications. For example, districts may request a list of applicants who possess an endorsement in special education in the area of mild disabilities. Districts frequently contact applicants directly for interviews and recruitment.

ATP job fairs

ATP also sponsors annual job fairs typically held during April and July in Anchorage and Fairbanks. In 1993, ATP's registrant pool numbered 1357, and most school districts participated. ATP can be contacted at the following address:

Alaska Teacher Placement
Mary Ellen LaBerge, Director
University of Alaska Fairbanks
P.O. Box 756880
Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-1550
UACN: FYATP
Phone: (907) 474-6644, Fax: (907) 474-6176

Recruitment categories

An effective recruitment program can be organized into the following categories:

I. Gathering information
II. Developing recruiters, materials, and strategies
III. Screening and interviewing applicants

I. Gathering Information

1. Solicit input from staff regarding what specific training or skills they perceive as essential for job success in the vacant position (Florida Department of Education [FL DOE], 1990).

Solicit input from staff

2. Investigate what has or has not worked with the district's recruitment efforts in the past. Find out what is currently in use (MSRRC, 1987).

Investigate past efforts

3. Consider using the Teacher Perceiver Interview system, which a number of districts have found works well. It is published by Gallup and requires special training. For further information, contact the people listed in the appendix with TPI following their name. The publisher's address is listed below.

Teacher Perceiver Interview

Selection Research Institute, Inc.
P.0. Box 6438
Lincoln, Nebraska 68506

4. Network with colleagues statewide about promising applicants whose names they might be willing to share (Brady, in press).

Network

5. Develop an evaluation plan listing yearly activities, costs incurred, and the number of new hires to facilitate monitoring recruitment efforts and results. Comparing the costs incurred with data on efforts provides an evaluation of the program's most and least successful components. Ask for feedback from others regarding the program's effectiveness (MSRRC, 1987).

Evaluation plan

Elimination of applications

6. Eliminate the application form. At least one Alaskan district requires none. Their intent is to use nothing that requires a typewriter or a pencil. In addition to a resume, the applicant is encouraged to send any additional information or materials, such as a grant, curriculum, or a video. Relevant demographic information is usually accessible from the applicant's resume. Specific information about multicultural issues could be gained through a question in the application directions, such as, "What experience do you have working with Native American people?" This administrator also suggested that the applicant be encouraged to submit their application materials on a specific format of disc or by fax modem. Insights into the applicant's degree of computer literacy can be gained through this approach. For further information contact the person in the appendix with "Eliminate application forms" following the name (AK CSPD Survey, 1994).

Professional needs vary

7. Consider the diverse professional needs of applicants. Beginning teachers with limited teaching experience cite dissatisfaction with the field because of lack of support from parents and inadequate resources. When recruiting these applicants, build and stress parental involvement and describe available resources truthfully. Masters level teachers are more frustrated by the lack of professional opportunities. When recruiting these applicants, develop and promote professional opportunities (National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education [NCPSE], 1989).

Identify incentives

8. Identify incentives that have been successful in your district so that they may be featured in recruitment materials. Specific incentives are listed under the Retention section of this manual (FL DOE, 1990).

II. Developing recruiters, materials, and strategies

Recruiters. Recruitment is heavily dependent on both human interaction and public relations. Individuals or recruiters who interact effectively with others are essential.

Interviewer assets

9. Choose interviewers with whom applicants might feel comfortable and from whom they might receive reinforcement. The interviewer should be able to create positive interactions with all potential applicants (FL DOE, 1990).

10. Train special education personnel to be recruiters for the profession (Simpson, et al., 1990).

11. Be aware that the most important factor is the impression left by the recruiter. She/he needs to strive to be remembered in very positive terms (FL DOE, 1990).

12. Consider making the position of recruiter a step in the district's career ladder (FL DOE, 1990).

"Selling" a district

13. "Sell" the district through creative marketing techniques. As Dale Carnegie claimed, "packaging" is 80% of marketing a product (Helge & Marrs, 1982).

Videos

14. Develop a videotape presentation of the district and/or community. Several Alaskan districts have cited this as the most important part of their recruitment program. For a contact address, refer to the appendix and the name above "Recruitment video." The CSPD has also developed a video entitled "Don't Listen to Aunt Louise." This video is distributed by Alaska Teacher Placement.

Alaska Teacher Placement
MaryEllen LaBerge, Director
University of Alaska Fairbanks
P.O. Box 756880
Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-1550
UACN: FYATP
Phone: (907) 474-6644, Fax: (907) 474-6176

15. Develop a brochure or other written/pictorial information. Make the information attractive and present a positive image of the district while providing a realistic description of the schools and community. For further information, the person listed in the appendix with "Recruitment brochure" following the name can be contacted (FL DOE, 1990). ***Brochures***

16. Use recruitment strategies that show clearly the employment opportunities for spouses that may exist in the community (FL DOE, 1990). ***Employment for spouses***

17. Prepare recruitment "packets" with Chamber of Commerce information, maps, brochures, information about culture, housing, weather, transportation, and whatever else seems relevant (FL DOE, 1990). ***Recruitment "packets"***

18. Emphasize the special quality of Alaskan life and communities. Reinforce the unique features which are intrinsic motivators and will meet teachers' social, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs (Helge & Marrs, 1982).

19. Design the recruitment program to appeal to persons with lifestyles, interests, and attitudes consistent with local cultural norms. The following would be some factors to consider incorporating: specific academic programs, professional development, social and entertainment opportunities, recreational possibilities, and cultural attributes (Helge & Marrs, 1982). ***Consistency with local cultural norms***

20. Target images that convey altruism, children as valued by the community, and teachers as valued by the community (FL DOE, 1990).

21. Emphasize information about local advantages, working conditions, opportunities for advancement, factors likely to appeal to a sense of professionalism, financial incentives, and benefits (FL DOE, 1990).

22. Develop a sales portfolio that can be used during recruitment interviews. It could be set up as a table-top flip chart or as a 3-ring binder to display facts about the district (FL DOE, 1990). ***Sales portfolio***

23. Use SpecialNet to advertise nationally for job vacancies. The address is listed below (MSRRC, 1987). ***SpecialNet***

GTE Interactive Educational Network Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 911527
Dallas, Texas 75391-1527
1-800-927-3000

Media

24. Use newspaper advertisements for announcing job vacancies. Some districts have had success using them (AK CSPD Survey, 1994).

25. Use local TV and radio to reach the reserve pool of teachers who are not currently working (FL DOE, 1990).

Practicum students

26. Accept special education students into your district for their practica and student learning experiences. After completing the program, they may opt to seek employment in the district (Simpson, et al., 1990).

Raised in rural areas

27. Review college placement files and seek individuals from rural areas. Research findings indicate that individuals who come from rural areas are most likely to return. Keep in mind that only 20% of rurally raised students want to return to rural areas (Bell, et al., 1993).

28. Use individualized "hot buttons, " such as advertising the rural lifestyle as an escape from urban problems or use the "Peace Corps" approach (Helge & Marrs, 1982).

Academic assistance

29. Recruit promising minority students into the special education field. Provide academic assistance programs for Alaska native students (Simpson, et al., 1990).

30. Cooperate with other small districts to sponsor scholarships that require the recipients to teach in rural districts (Simpson, et al., 1990).

31. Recruit teachers with positive community ties. The most successful teachers appear to be those who are welcome in local homes, participate in community activities, and invite community members to their homes (Helge & Marrs, 1982).

III. Screening and interviewing applicants

Include the community in interviews

32. Include other school personnel, school board members, and community in the interview process (AK CSPD Survey, 1994).

33. Stress in interviews the strategies that the district uses to retain qualified effective personnel (AK CSPD Survey, 1994).

Descriptions of peer support

34. Provide descriptions of potential informal and formal peer support groups. This is typically a much stronger attraction than verbiage concerning available facilities and equipment (MSRRC, 1987).

Incentives

35. Provide an incentive for teachers to accept a job in a critical shortage area or high priority location. Potential incentives are listed under the Retention section of this manual. Examples of "critical shortage areas" would include any special education positions which have been difficult to fill or have been known to be stressful. A "high priority location" may consist of a specific school or location that experiences difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers. Again, try to identify appropriate incentives. The ideas listed under Retention may be explored (MSRRC, 1987).

Summer employment

36. Provide or suggest opportunities for summer employment for teachers (Simpson, et al., 1990).

37. Follow through on the most promising resumes received in the mail. The extra effort often pays off in highly motivated teachers (AK CSPD Survey, 1994).

38. Ask the most promising candidates to interview on site (if possible). This fosters local empowerment. The teacher interacts with the community and has community support from the start (AK CSPD Survey, 1994). ***Interview on site***

39. Pay expenses for the strongest applicants to visit the district (Casto, 1981).

40. Be honest about the challenges a community poses. Teacher attrition is often linked with a discontinuity between idyllic expectations and harsh realities (AK CSPD Survey, 1994). ***Honesty about challenges***

41. Pay part of a teacher's relocation expenses (FL DOE, 1990).

42. Arrange a "package deal" by employing a teaching couple (FL DOE, 1990).

43. Observe the applicant teaching, if possible (MSRRC, 1987). ***Observe teaching***

44. Encourage applicants to submit a teaching portfolio that contains samples of their lesson plans for students and their teaching philosophy, as well as a teaching sample on video tape (Schnorr, 1994). ***Teaching portfolio***

45. Check references by calling the supervising teacher, teacher training advisor, and other professionals who have observed the candidate teaching (MSRRC, 1987).

46. Review summer work experience. Seasonal employment at a youth camp or group home is a good indicator of an applicant's sincere interest in working with children (AK CSPD Survey, 1994). ***Review summer work experience***

47. Debrief new employees during the year to talk about the recruitment program and to get suggestions for improving activities (MSRRC, 1987). ***Debrief new employees***

48. Do a cost analysis to determine whether the money spent on recruitment is allocated the best way possible (MSRRC, 1987). ***Cost analysis of recruitment***

49. Look for past evidence of work experience in cross-cultural situations (AK CSPD Survey, 1994). ***Cross-cultural experience***

Indicators of successful special educators

50. Look for the following characteristics in applicants for special education positions, as specified by Alaskan administrators of special education statewide (AK CSPD Survey, 1990):

A. Determine whether the applicant is a "special educator" who has made a commitment to the profession, or an educator with a special education endorsement " who is merely seeking employment. Commitment to the profession is essential for program development and stability.

B. Look for specific special education knowledge. How up-to-date is the candidate? Do they understand current state regulations? Are they knowledgeable about new special education techniques for inclusion?

C. Determine whether the candidate is interested in professional growth activities.

D. Avoid hiring people who do not appear able to handle stress.

E. Assess personality to determine how they will fit into the school and community environments.

F. Look for flexibility.

G. Look for people who enjoy winter and winter activities.

H. Look for a congenial personality.

I. Look for a sense of humor.

J. Look for a philosophical match.

K. Look for a willingness to team and work collaboratively.

L. Look for people who genuinely like children and people.

M. Look for people able to postpone short-term gratification in favor of long-term gratification.

RETENTION

Definition

Retention is defined as the efforts or strategies utilized to keep qualified personnel in the job pool. District practices for retaining personnel may also prove useful in attracting new special education teachers.

Emotional support

Teacher retention is enhanced when emotional support is provided. Emotional support encompasses the following: maintaining open communication with teachers, listening to their needs, and appreciating and recognizing their efforts. These actions show support for teachers, and costs are minimal. They are also intrinsic to good administrative practice (Billingsley, et al., 1993).

In this booklet, the strategies designed to enhance teacher retention are grouped into the following five categories:

Retention categories

I. Welcoming new staff
II. Collegiality
III. Work control
IV. Professional development
V. Achievement and recognition
VI. Resources

Data from AK CSPD Survey *

Information from the 1993 Alaska CSPD Teacher Survey Report is included in this document in the appropriate categories listed above. The 30 incentives from the survey are identified with an asterisk *. The number ranking and the percentage of Alaskan special education teachers who indicated that item as an incentive are cited, followed by a brief explanation.

I. Welcoming new staff

1. Provide preservice training which addresses specific local customs and challenges (AK CSPD Survey, 1994). ***Preservice training***

2. Arrange a social function to introduce new staff to the community (Smith-Davis & Murray, 1991). ***Social function***

3. Orient new teachers to the school and community by providing information such as the following: 1) names and duties of school staff members, 2) administrative procedures, 3) clear statements of expectations, 4) curriculum objectives, 5) course outlines, 6) a calendar of school year dates, 7) maps of the school and community, and 8) lists of community resources (FL DOE, 1990). ***Orientation***

4. Involve new teachers in an activity or program outside the classroom which requires interacting with school and community personnel (Helge & Marrs, 1982).

5. Be aware that the highest rate of attrition occurs during the first five years of teaching. High attrition rates may be reduced through collegial support networks including the following support strategies: 1) assign a veteran teacher to work with each beginning teacher in a mentoring or peer teaching format; or 2) place new teachers in team teaching situations where support is readily available (Billingsley, et al., 1993). ***Attrition prevention***

6. Help spouses of new employees find employment (MSRRC, 1987). ***Spouses***

7. Facilitate the search for housing or subsidize teacher housing through cooperative arrangements with businesses (MSRRC, 1987). ***Housing***

II. Collegiality

Although many teachers work in professional isolation within their classrooms, the unique aspects of teaching special education make forming productive relationships with peers even more challenging. The learning opportunities afforded by productive collegial relationships promote both professional collaboration and a sense of belonging (Gallagher, 1993). The area of "Collegiality" contained three out of the 15 top "Incentives for Teaching Special Education" (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***#1 AK teacher incentive***

*** 8.** Provide a supportive principal. Although 88% of Alaskan special education teachers cited a supportive principal as a retention incentive, unfortunately, only 52% felt they had one. Since such a large percentage of Alaskan teachers indicated this was a "Definite" incentive, it ranked as #1 overall (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***Principal supportive of change***

*** 9.** Supply a principal supportive of educational change. Only 49% of the teachers surveyed felt they had a principal who was supportive of change. However, 71% of Alaskan special education teachers surveyed indicated this was a "Definite" incentive (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***Teacher network***

*** 10.** Provide a network to share ideas. Possibilities include the following:

a. Schedule regular meetings to "talk out" difficulties (AK CSPD Survey, 1994).

b. Use an electronic bulletin board for rural teachers as a support network (AK CSPD Survey, 1994). Fifty-four percent of Alaskan special education teachers surveyed indicated this was a "Definite" incentive (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***Partnerships***

*** 11.** Make mentoring or partnerships available to new teachers in districts. See item 10. below for contact address for more information. Thirty-two percent of Alaskan special education teachers indicated this was a "Definite" incentive (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***Teacher assistance teams***

*** 12.** Implement teacher assistance teams within the district. Possibilities include the following:

A. Use regular meetings to conduct clinical case reviews of challenging students and then problem-solve through anecdotal records (AK CSPD Survey, 1994).

B. Schedule specific time for collaboration between regular and special education teachers (Billingsley, et al., 1993). Thirty-one percent indicated this was a "Definite" incentive to teaching special education (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***School as the center of the community***

*** 13.** Center the community around the school. Twenty-four percent of Alaskan special education teachers indicated this was an incentive (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***Collaboration with university***

*** 14.** Collaborate with university faculty. Twenty-two percent of Alaskan teachers indicated this was a "Definite" incentive to teaching special education (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***Media exposure***

*** 15.** Share educational programs with the community via the media. Fourteen percent of the special education teachers surveyed felt this was an incentive to remaining in their field (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

Create time for collaboration

16. Implement a peer tutoring program between two classes. Students can assist each other while one of the teachers is released to collaborate with another professional (VA DOE, 1993).

17. Release a few teachers to work together when assemblies or other large-group student activities are scheduled. Other staff member can assume responsibility for the students they were supervising (VA DOE, 1993).

18. Revise the school schedule to provide joint planning time for the teachers who collaborate most together (VA DOE, 1993).

19. Use at least part of any professional development days in the calendar to plan for collaboration (VA DOE, 1993).

"Wellness" program

20. Consider incorporating a "Wellness" program to promote collegiality and better health, while reducing stress. Stress reduction activities can include anything from desensitization to "venting," social functions to physiological stress reduction exercises, and establishing local support systems for continuous stress reduction. For further information on one district's Wellness Program, contact the person listed in the Appendix with "* Wellness program" following the address.

The University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) frequently conducts a five day H.O.P.E. Institute, designed for **H**ealth, **O**utdoor, and **P**hysical **E**ducators, and Enthusiasts. The contact address is, as follows:

H.O.P.E. Institute
School of Education
College of Community and Continuing Education
University of Alaska Anchorage
3211 Providence Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Mentoring

21. Implement mentoring for new teachers entering or reentering the profession (Gallagher, 1993). The Anchorage School District and UAA participate in a joint mentoring project. For further information regarding this program contact:

Dr. Patricia Kyle
School of Education
University of Alaska Anchorage
3211 Providence Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99508
786-1987

"Embrace the culture"

22. Encourage teachers to "embrace the culture" - wherever or whatever it may be (AK CSPD Survey, 1994).

23. Arrange for regular social gatherings. Several districts have potlucks after specific deadlines have been reached to unwind together (AK CSPD Survey, 1994).

Social gatherings

24. Involve the community, local businesses, and civic groups in welcoming new teachers and welcoming back returning teachers (Smith-Davis & Murray, 1991).

25. Visit teachers' rooms regularly (Gallagher, 1993).

26. Make new staff aware of the local power structure and communication system (FL DOE, 1990).

27. Establish ways for newcomers to have positive social experiences and to publicize their achievement with certain types of children so that they are readily accepted by their peers (Helge & Marrs, 1982).

28. Place newcomers on committees where they can contribute and share past experiences (MSRRC, 1987).

Training for parent/teacher collaboration

29. Provide teachers with training regarding effective parent/teacher conferencing skills. Include specific suggestions that help teachers bridge cultural differences (Billingsley, et al., 1993).

30. Create a library of videos of effective instructional practices in schools for sharing among districts (FL DOE, 1990).

III. Work control

The motivation to teach effectively requires that teachers be given the power to control certain conditions that influence the outcome of their efforts. This translates to having control over those factors which influence teaching performance; thus empowering teachers to make accurate judgments regarding the outcome of their endeavors. Work control encompasses decision-making power about the variables affecting the outcome of teaching, such as work load, school policies, role clarity, and role harmony (Gallagher, 1993). Alaskan teachers ranked four "Work control" issues in the top five "Incentives for Teaching Special Education."

* **31.** Provide planning time. Eighty-four percent of the teachers surveyed indicated this was a "Definite" incentive to remain in special education, thus ranking it #2 overall (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***Planning time***

* **32.** Place a cap on case load. Approximately 84% of Alaskan teachers surveyed indicated limiting case loads was a "Definite" incentive in the field of special education, thus ranking it #3 (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***Cap on case load***

* **33.** Provide release time for testing. Eighty percent of the Alaskan teachers surveyed indicated release time for testing was an incentive to remain in the profession, thus ranking it as #4 (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***Release time for testing***

* **34.** Place a cap on class size. Seventy-six percent of the special education teachers in the survey felt this was an incentive to continue in their chosen field, thus ranking it #5 overall (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***Cap on class size***

* **35.** Provide job rotation options (special education to regular education.) Forty-four percent of the teachers surveyed indicated this was a "Definite" incentive to remain in special education (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***Job rotation options***

36. Consider job rotation whereby teachers can change assignments or roles for one year out of every four or five. Rotation may not only be horizontal, but also vertical, into a superivsory or consulting position (Florida, 1990).

* **37.** Sharing jobs - having the option to work half-time. This allows two part-time teachers to fill one full-time position. Mothers with young children sometimes prefer this schedule. Twenty-eight percent of Alaskan teachers indicated this was a "Definite" incentive to the special education field (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993). — **** Job sharing***

38. Solicit and use teacher's ideas for institutional policy making.

39. Share with special education staff the power to make decisions regarding scheduling, budget development, student discipline codes, grading policies, school, grade, and subject level assignments. This promotes responsibility and a general sense of personal investment. — ***Policy making input***

40. Define special education teachers' roles. Ambiguity in role definition results in lowered motivation and efficacy. — ***Role definition***

41. Provide assistance in developing effective strategies for student advocacy so that special education teachers can develop into constructive student advocates (Gallagher, 1993). — ***Promote student advocates***

42. Provide paraprofessional or sub help as needed and as budgeting allows. — ***Paraprofessional Assistance***

43. Offer assistance in resolving scheduling conflicts between general and special education (Gallagher, 1993). — ***Scheduling assistance***

44. Involve special education personnel in curriculum development for the district or school.

45. Minimize paper-work. Research indicates that special education teachers are reinforced specifically by their students and not by activities such as paper-work which takes them away from students. — ***Minimize paperwork***

46. Investigate the possibility of including teachers on the school board. One school district in Alaska has found this to have a positive effect on education. For more information, contact the person with "* Teachers on the school board" following the address in the Appendix. — ***Teachers on the school board***

47. Hire highly qualified teachers who must reduce their work time commitment to work part-time in one of the following capacities: part-time mentors, trainers, curriculum consultants, or to complete short-term tasks for the district (Florida, 1990). — ***Part-time employment***

IV. Professional Development

Federal and state mandates

Besides being mandated by both federal and state legislation, professional training is essential in special education to ensure a relevant knowledge base for effectiveness in this dynamic field. Professional development involves inservice training, graduate studies, and adding additional endorsements (Schnorr, 1994). Schnorr & Straugh (1993) found four of the top 15 "Incentives for Teaching Special Education" involved Professional Development.

** Release time*

*** 48.** Provide release time for professional development. Sixty-four percent of Alaskan special education teachers indicated this was a "Definite" incentive to remain in the field (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

** Professional development on site*

*** 49.** Make professional development available on site. Fifty percent of the teachers surveyed indicated that this was an incentive in the field of special education (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

** Stipends for additional endorsements*

*** 50.** Provide stipends for pursuing additional endorsements. Forty-nine percent of Alaskan special education teachers indicated that this was an incentive to remain in the field (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

** Stipends for summer school*

*** 51.** Provide financial support for summer workshops. This may include a small stipend to held defray costs. Approximately forty-nine percent of the teachers surveyed considered this an incentive to remain in special education (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

** Graduate courses*

*** 52.** Provide opportunities for advanced degrees on site. Thirty-nine percent of the Alaskan teachers surveyed indicated that this was an incentive in the field of special education (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

** Professional literature*

*** 53.** Provide access to professional literature, including Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) publications. Thirty-five percent of the surveyed teachers considered this to be a retention incentive (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

** Videotape library*

*** 54.** Provide access to a library of videotapes for professional development. Twenty-six percent of Alaskan special education teachers indicated that this was an incentive in the field of special education (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

*** 55.** Provide teacher exchange options with other districts. Twenty-three percent of the teachers surveyed considered this to be a retention incentive (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993). Also encourage teachers to explore exchanges internationally. The persons listed in the Appendix with "* Teacher exchanges" have had successful exchanges in their districts and can be contacted for more information.

* ***Teacher exchanges***

*** 56.** Implement a career ladder to supervisory roles. Nineteen percent of the Alaskan teachers surveyed indicated that this was an incentive to remain in special education (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***Career ladders***

Design district career ladders with multiple career options. For teachers, some suggestions might include: mentor teacher, lead teacher, recruiter, trainer, teacher assistance team member or leader, supervisor, curriculum specialist, or administrator. Career ladders for paraprofessionals could lead to teaching roles (FL DOE, 1990).

*** 57.** Encourage teachers to teach professional development courses. Fourteen percent of the teachers surveyed considered this to be a retention incentive (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

58. Assist special education teachers with the development of professional growth plans which meet both individual and district needs.

* ***Professional growth plans***

59. Utilize "outreach" programs to train and retain special education teachers in rural areas. The U.A.A. Distance Education program offers a number of courses via distance delivery that incorporates a combination of professional literature, videotape, and audioconference. The program also requires classes on campus during the summer. For current offerings, contact the following address:

University courses and programs

Distance Education/Telecom Center
College of Community and Continuing Education
University of Alaska Anchorage, Building K
3211 Providence Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99508
786-1626

60. Have available current catalogs from UAA and other universities with information on course offerings that can be completed both on campus and through distance delivery

CEC professional development

61. Inform staff about CEC professional development offerings as they become available.

Professions Information Center
The Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, Virginia 22091
(703) 264-9474

AK Staff Development Network

62. Encourage special education teachers to participate in the summer academies offered by the Alaska Staff Development Network. The contact address is listed below.

Kelly Tonsmeire, Alaska Staff Development Network
University of Alaska Southeast
School of Career and Continuing Education
1108 "F" Street
Juneau, Alaska 99801
(907) 465-8745, Fax: 465-2166

Task forces

63. Encourage and identify opportunities for teachers to participate on local, state, and national committees and task forces (FL DOE, 1993).

Adjunct university faculty

64. Collaborate with local colleges and universities to develop teachers as adjunct faculty members in the delivery of district-based outreach services and on campus (FL DOE, 1990).

Inservice teachers

65. Support teachers who want to become district inservice teachers. Encourage them to participate in CSPD training related to the Paraprofessional and Early Childhood Inservice Modules. The following person can be contacted for additional information:

DiAnn Brown
Department of Education
801 West 10th Street, Suite 200
Juneau, Alaska 99801
(907) 465-2972, Fax 465-3396

Summer employment

66. Work with local businesses and agencies to develop summer job opportunities for teachers, particularly in fields where new skills can be applied in the classroom (FL DOE, 1990).

Writing about teaching

67. Encourage and assist teachers and administrators to write articles about their methods and experiences for publication (FL DOE, 1990).

68. Set up school and district procedures for identifying promising classroom practices and distribute outcomes to other schools (FL DOE, 1990). ***Promising practices***

69. Videotape effective teaching techniques of local teachers for use during inservices (FL DOE, 1990). ***Videotape***

70. Identify and assist teachers to develop presentations and workshops at local, state, and national conferences. Facilitate their participation through release time, reimbursement of travel expenses, and other means (FL DOE, 1990). ***Promote and share expertise***

V. Achievement and Recognition

The choice to enter the field of special education is frequently based on the rewards intrinsic to the profession. Therefore, it is important that teachers be able to both recognize and be recognized for their accomplishments. Knowledge of one's positive performance has been referred to as psychic rewards. For special education teachers these psychic rewards include a sense of accomplishment and a meaningfulness of work (Gallagher, 1993). Three of the top 15 "Incentives for Teaching Special Education" for Alaskans were in the area of Achievement and Recognition.

*** 71.** Facilitate support for special education in the community. Fifty-six percent of the Alaskan teachers surveyed indicated that community support for special education was a "Definite' incentive (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***Community Support***

*** 72.** Facilitate community appreciation of teachers. Over half (51%) of the teachers surveyed considered community appreciation of teachers important (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***Community appreciation***

*** 73.** Implement school/district recognition of professional efforts. Half (50%) of the Alaskan teachers surveyed indicated that school/district recognition of professional efforts was a "Definite" incentive (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***Recognition of professional efforts***

74. Be aware that performance ratings completed by principals are the strongest single indicator of job satisfaction for beginning teachers. This is in spite of the research attesting to the problems of constructing fair and accurate evaluations (Gallagher, 1993).

Performance ratings

75. Send out letters of appreciation or congratulations on a job well done (AK CSPD Survey, 1994).

Acknowledgment of Appreciation

76. Formally recognize efforts "above and beyond" the call of duty.

77. Tell teachers what they are doing <u>right</u>. Make appreciation of teachers part of the overall school climate.

78. Provide informal feedback regularly (Gallagher, 1993).

79. Explain to beginning special education teachers how district forms and expectations will reflect their work with exceptional students.

80. Collaborate with business, civic, and professional groups to develop recognition programs, awards, volunteer activities, and general appreciation of teachers.

81. Use merit increases or other approaches to recognize extraordinary performance.

VI. Resources

This includes equipment, materials and financial support (Gallagher, 1993). It is the toughest area to augment in times of declining oil revenues. Alaskan special education teachers ranked "Sufficient supplies" as seventh when prioritizing "Incentives."

* ***Sufficient supplies***

*** 82.** Keep sufficient quantities of supplies and materials available. Alaskan special education teachers considered sufficient resources important enough that 67% of them indicated it to be a "Definite" incentive (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***Mini grants***

*** 83.** Make mini grants for special classroom projects available. Twenty-nine percent of Alaskan teachers of special education considered classroom mini grants important as an incentive (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

* ***Day care for children***

*** 84.** Make day care available for children. Seventeen percent of Alaskan teachers indicated that day care was a retention incentive (Schnorr & Straugh, 1993).

85. Problems with equipment are ranked among the top in terms of frustration for teachers (Gallagher, 1993).

86. Be aware that lack of resources is highly related to special education teacher burnout (Gallagher, 1993).

Funding and burnout

87. Investigate the relationship between funding levels and burnout among special educators (Gallagher, 1993).

88. Be aware of the direct linkage between teachers' perceptions of low financial support for their classroom endeavors and a decreased sense of personal accomplishment (Gallagher, 1993).

Money for conferences

89. Provide money for conferences.

CSPD grants

90. Inform staff of CSPD grants. Special education directors statewide receive information on the grants yearly. Contact the Department of Education (DOE) at the address below for further information:

DiAnn Brown
Alaska Department of Education
801 West 10th Street, Suite 200
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1894
(907) 465-2972, Fax 465-3396

91. Provide a support network which accesses content-related information as needed.	***Content information network***
92. Augment salaries and benefits.	***Financial incentive***
93. Provide salary increments for multiple endorsements.	
94. Provide tuition reimbursements for professional development.	
95. Pay or reimburse fees for professional memberships.	
96. Encourage teachers to use resources from the community.	***Resources from the community***
97. Consider implementing a computerized curriculum system. A contact person is listed in the appendix for one such system, called TRACE. Under the address, look for "* Computerized curriculum" (AK CSPD Survey, 1994).	***Computerized curriculum***
98. Prepare a master list of instructional materials and directions for locating them (Gallagher, 1993).	***Master list of resources***
99. Ask special education staff about perceived needs for both the present and the future (Gallagher, 1993)	***Conduct needs analysis***
100. Encourage and support sharing of materials among teachers. Provide a central location and check-out procedures to prevent useful materials from "getting out of circulation" (Gallagher, 1993).	***Link people and resources***
101. Encourage beginning teachers to consult with experienced teachers about specific materials and their use (Gallagher, 1993).	
102. Compile a list of the special topics (e.g., crafts, outdoor skills, travelogues, etc.) which faculty on site would be willing to share with other classes and colleagues (Helge & Marrs, 1982).	***List of special topic resources***

References

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Appendix A List of Contact People for Specific Information

Marsha Buck, Retired from S.E.R.R.C.
(907) 789-6167
* T.P.I. - Teacher Perceiver Interview

Rich Dahlberg, Special Education Director
Dillingham City Schools
P.O. Box 170
Dillingham, Alaska 99576
(907) 842-5221, Fax 842-5634
* Teacher exchanges

Tom Everitt, Personnel Director
North Slope Borough Schools
P.O. Box 169
Barrow, Alaska 99723
(907) 852-5311, Fax 852-5984
* Recruitment video
* Recruitment brochure

Mark Hiratsuka, Special Education Director
Valdez City Schools
P.O. Box 398
Valdez, Alaska 99686
(907) 835-4735, Fax 835-4964
* Wellness program

Lin Laughy, Superintendent
Mt. Edgecumbe High School
1330 Seward Avenue
Sitka, Alaska 99835
(907) 966-2201, Fax 966-2442
* Eliminating application forms

Donn Liston - NEA - Alaska
114 Second Street
Juneau, Alaska 99801
(907) 586-3090, Fax 586-2744
* Teacher exchanges - with Australia

Bud Martin, Special Education Director
Ketchikan Gateway Borough Schools
Pouch Z
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901
(907) 225-2805, Fax 225-2356
* T.P.I. - Teacher Perceiver Interview
* Teacher exchanges

Larry "Woody" Wilson, Special Education Director
Alaska Gateway Schools
P.O. Box 226
Tok, Alaska 99780
(907) 883-5151, Fax 883-5154
* T.P.I. - Teacher Perceiver Interview
* Teachers on the school board
* Computerized curriculum